



**Contact:**

SAUL MARKOWITZ [saul@markowitzcommunications.com](mailto:saul@markowitzcommunications.com)  
Markowitz Communications  
412-977-8517

[Photos Available Here](#)

CHARLIQUE C. ROLLE [charlique@gildedroadproductions.com](mailto:charlique@gildedroadproductions.com)  
August Wilson New Voices / Gilded Road Productions  
312-395-0747

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**WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR AUGUST WILSON NEW VOICES NATIONAL  
COMPETITION HELD IN PITTSBURGH  
\*\*\*FIRST-PLACE WINNER IS LAYLA MACK OF ATLANTA**

**STUDENT FINALISTS IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MONOLOGUE AND DESIGN COMPETITION  
HAIL FROM ATLANTA, BOSTON, CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES AND PITTSBURGH\*\*\***

**PITTSBURGH:** The 18th Annual Monologue and Design Competition of the August Wilson New Voices program culminated in a night of celebration as thirteen student finalists from across the nation captivated audiences with their remarkable performances and designs inspired by the timeless works of August Wilson. Held in the heart of Wilson's hometown, Pittsburgh, the event showcased the immense talent and dedication of young artists from Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Pittsburgh.

Layla Mack (Atlanta), representing the Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts, soared to victory with her poignant portrayal of Rose from *Fences*, earning the coveted title of National Monologue Champion. Terrence Tate (Atlanta) of Heritage High School, and Yenay Cuevas (Los Angeles) from the Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts secured the titles of 1st and 2nd Runners-Up, respectively, with their compelling performances as characters from Wilson's iconic plays.

The monologue competition was adjudicated by Mark Clayton Southers, Javon Johnson, and Sakina Ansari Wilson.

Janeci Correa (Chicago) from the Chicago High School for the Arts claimed the National Design Champion title, while J'Maria Stamps (Chicago) of DRW College Prep impressed as the Runner-Up. Their creative interpretations brought Wilson's rich narratives to life in stunning visual form.

The design competition was adjudicated by Susan Tsu and Courtney O'Neill.

August Wilson's enduring legacy continues to inspire and empower students across the country. His profound exploration of the African American experience resonates deeply with young artists, offering a mirror to their own identities and struggles. Through his timeless stories of resilience, love, and hope, Wilson ignites a passion for storytelling and a commitment to community upliftment.

“By bringing the competition to Pittsburgh, we allowed students across the country to experience the city's rich cultural history and to connect with August on a deeper and more personal level—through his archives, his childhood home, and much of the community that inspired his work,” says Derrick Sanders, AWNV National Director.

Are you ready to ignite your passion for storytelling and join the August Wilson New Voices movement? Registration for the 2024-2025 season is now open! Whether you're interested in bringing the program to your city or participating as an individual or school in one of our current cities (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, or Pittsburgh), seize this opportunity to be part of a transformative journey.

Applications are being reviewed on a rolling basis through July 1, 2024. To learn more about the program or to apply, visit [GoodmanTheatre.org/AugustWilson](http://GoodmanTheatre.org/AugustWilson) or email [hello@gildedroadproductions.com](mailto:hello@gildedroadproductions.com). Don't miss your chance to be part of this enriching experience and make your mark on the legacy of August Wilson.

Past winners have included actor Jeremy Pope (Tony-nominated originating actor for the role of Eddie Kendricks in the Broadway production of "Ain't Too Proud"), actress Kristolyn Lloyd (Althea Rice in the Broadway production of "Dear Evan Hansen"), playwright Chinaza Uche ("Russian Doll"), and Jasmine Cephas Jones (originated the role of Peggy Schuyler/Maria Reynolds in "Hamilton").

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## **ABOUT AUGUST WILSON**

Born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, **August Wilson** (1945-2005) authored the American Century Cycle of 10 plays, including *Gem of the Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *King Hedley II* and *Radio Golf*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African Americans, decade by decade, over the course of the 20th century. Goodman Theatre was the first in the country to have produced every play in Wilson's cycle. In 2003, Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show *How I Learned What I Learned*. Wilson's work garnered many awards, including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987) and *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; as well as seven New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars* and *Jitney*. Additionally, the cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. On October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theater located at 245 West 52nd Street the August Wilson Theatre.

## **ABOUT AUGUST WILSON NEW VOICES**

August Wilson New Voices (formerly the “August Wilson Monologue Competition”) is a national performance and design program honoring one of the greatest American playwrights: Pulitzer Prize winner August Wilson (1945 – 2005). Through this program, we aim to provide exposure to and cultivate an appreciation for Wilson’s 10-play American Century Cycle in every high school across the country, giving voice to the next generation where they can see themselves in Wilson’s work and are empowered to tell their story from their own unique lens. The August Wilson New Voices National Program is produced by the August Wilson Legacy LLC, the Goodman Theatre, and Gilded Road Productions and is proudly sponsored by The Heinz Endowments and the Goodman Theatre.